

A Calendar Summary

The Dangers of Calendar Change

John W. Ritenbaugh

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I do not know if you are aware of it, but there is what I will refer to as a *fever of presumption* that has broken out in the church of God. Now, I do not mean the Church of the Great God. I mean the church of God, period. One man, heading one group, calls himself "God's anointed." Another calls himself "God's chosen." Of and by themselves, these terms might be considered as fairly innocuous, but because of the circumstance that the church finds itself in at this time, those titles carry illusions of something that is far greater than a mere church pastor.

Another man calls himself "the Pastor General" and has a program called "The Continuing"—through which they attempt to continue *everything*, apparently down to the last detail, instituted by Herbert Armstrong. He also identified himself as "that prophet" of Deuteronomy 18:15. But, of course, there are several different men out there who claim that they and their group are the rightful successors of Herbert W. Armstrong.

Now the Church of the Great God has not escaped these self-proclaimed designations, because this summer we had a man leave us who feels that he is Joshua (of the book of Zechariah) and that I am Zerubbabel (of that same book). Of course, the logical extension of this is that there is a pretty fair indication, in the book of Zechariah, that Zerubbabel and Joshua are "types" of the two witnesses.

In this there is a great deal of vanity, pride, and presumption. There is absolutely **no evidence** whatever that either of us fits the mold of the book of Zechariah. I am nothing but a church pastor, doing what God assigned me to do within my ordination as a minister of the church of God.

What I am saying here, or about to say, makes some people a little bit shaky; but I want to show you that I am on scriptural grounds. So please turn with me to I Timothy 5:19-20. Paul is writing to Timothy here, and he says:

I Timothy 5:19-20 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin [meaning the elders that sin] rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

You can recall that when Peter sinned—regarding what we find in the book of

Galatians—Paul rebuked Peter before all (even though he was an apostle) because, as Paul said there, he was wrong! Now Darryl [Henson] is using the calendar as a focal point to draw attention to himself, and thus a following—claiming that he has a conscience issue with it. I do not doubt at all that he has a conscience issue with it. But he is telling people that he and I are going to be reunited in the future, and that we are going to go on to do the work of Joshua and Zerubbabel together.

He ostensibly means by that, that I am going to repent and adopt his calendar. Here, again, I have to make an explanation. There is no indication whatsoever that the two witnesses do not see eye to eye on everything. That is, on any kind of major doctrine. I want to show you a major, major flaw in his thinking—and, of course, the thinking of those who are following him. For the sake of this illustration, let us **suppose** that I am Zerubbabel and that he knows (and he knows that he knows) that I am Zerubbabel.

Zechariah 4:6-10 Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This is the word of the LOORD unto Zerubbabel: [Now listen to this! It is said unto Zerubbabel.] Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, said the LOORD of host.'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouts, crying, 'Grace, grace unto it.'" Moreover, the word of the LOORD came unto me, saying, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the LOORD of hosts has sent me unto you. For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven. They are the eyes of the LOORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

Now consider these things: The human builder of the temple is clearly designated as Zerubbabel (*not* Joshua). It is he (Zerubbabel, *not* Joshua) to whom God gives the encouragement of great spiritual help. It is Zerubbabel who lays the foundation and completes the edifice. I have laid no foundations, brethren. That is one way that I know for sure that I am *not* Zerubbabel. I have laid no foundations of the church of God. I am helping, I hope, to build upon what somebody else laid. I am *not* Zerubbabel.

It is Zerubbabel who is shown having power to accomplish great things (*not* Joshua). It is Zerubbabel who is shown laying the foundation and completing the building; and, perhaps most critical to this message, perhaps most importantly it is Zerubbabel (*not* Joshua) who is shown holding the *plummet*. The plummet, or the plumb line, is a figure—an image—used in both Amos and Zechariah to indicate the *standard of*

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righteousness one should look to. Get that! The standard of righteousness that one should look to! It is what one is measured against, to determine what is right or wrong.

Now the one holding *the plummet*, indicating that they are the one that is *right*, is Zerubbabel (*not* Joshua). Assuming that I am Zerubbabel (as he is saying), both Darryl and those following him have been badly deceived in believing that he is right on the calendar issue. Do you understand what I have said so far? The Bible clearly points that, **if** there is any difference (of opinion, doctrine, or whatever) between Joshua and Zerubbabel, then it is Zerubbabel who is **right!** But let me add here, **nowhere** is there any indication given in the Bible that there is any difference of opinion—on doctrine—between Zerubbabel and Joshua. So, in this illustration, it is Joshua who would be the one who is wrong. It is Zerubbabel who is to be looked to for correct doctrine and upright conduct.

Now, Darryl is not right on several issues here. (1) I am not Zerubbabel. (2) He is not Joshua. And (3) his calendar is just as wrong as the other eight or nine models that are floating around out there in the Church of God. If I were Zerubbabel, why in the world would Joshua (who is supposed to be converted, and "knows" that I am Zerubbabel) ever want to leave the side of the one who is right? That does not make sense. That defies logic. Besides that, Zerubbabel is clearly portrayed in God's Word as being the one who is **in charge** of the team.

Now we are going to drop down to verse 11. In a way, this is a little bit of a digression, but it fits here. And it also fits into the sermon that I gave on Monday, on the book of Revelation.

You will have to figure out the chronology. Or maybe I will tell you where it fits.

Zechariah 4:11-14 Then answered I, and said unto him, "What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?" And I answered again, and said unto him, "What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?" And he answered me and said, "Know you not what these be?" And I said, "No, my lord." Then said he, "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

There are some additional things to cogitate on here. The two olive trees *are* the two witnesses of Revelation 11:1-6. That is clearly shown in Revelation 11. They are the two olive trees. My study Bible has a very interesting note, here in Zechariah 4, regarding

this. I will paraphrase what they say here, because it is a rather long note. Some of what I say will be exactly quoted. The rest will be paraphrased in order to make sure that we get this all in. They say:

The Hebrew is very specific here in its description of this image that Zechariah was given. This is **not** a menorah. What you see in Revelation 1 is a menorah. But this is not a menorah. It describes a single lampstand rising to and supporting a large bowl mounted on top. Surrounding the bowl (apparently at a somewhat lower level, to allow the oil to flow from the bowl) are seven lamps. The oil is flowing from the [two] trees (one on either side of the bowl) and then into the bowl, and from there into seven tubes joined to **each** of the seven lamps.

In other words, there are seven tubes for each lamp—for a total of forty-nine tubes coming from this. Thus the two witnesses are clearly shown abundantly feeding the entire church *before* the Tribulation. When this is combined with Revelation 2 and 3, this gives every indication that there are seven distinct organizations and the two witnesses—rising up *before* the Tribulation—within the church.

Again, get that picture of the two olive trees—Zerubbabel and Joshua, the two witnesses. There is no indication of disagreement if they are *both* feeding the church. This is important to what has occurred over these last several months, and especially during this last summer. In order to manufacture a disagreement between Zerubbabel and Joshua, Darryl had to badly misinterpret a very familiar scripture—Isaiah 52:7-8.

Isaiah 52:7-8 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that saith unto Zion, "Your God reigns!" Your watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

You can look at that and, right on the surface, you might get the impression that maybe there was difference of opinion—since they are now doing it together. However, just a little bit of research into virtually any commentary will straighten it out for you.

Adam Clarke says that verse should be translated "*all* your watchmen." *All* is more than two. Any city was defended on all four sides, by watchmen. They had people up on the walls. And there might be anywhere from two to each side of the city, to dozens on each

side of the city. So he says that should be translated "*all* your watchmen"—not just two.

The Interpreter's Commentary says that "eye to eye" has nothing whatever to do with an agreement following a rift. It has everything to do with all of the watchmen witnessing the same thing at the same time. What are they witnessing? The return of Jesus Christ is what they are witnessing.

These things have lead me to believe—at least, with an opinion—that (1) he is either very badly deceived on this thing, or that (2) this calendar thing has been contrived in order to fulfill his personal ambitions. On the other hand, this calendar issue is a great deal more serious than many people think it is. I have been looking into the calendar, off and on, since 1960. And I think that, in that period of time, I have distilled the essentials of a true understanding down to a few principles.

I bring this up because people are making very serious decisions, which may affect their salvation. By looking into a paper or two about the calendar, for maybe a couple of months, somehow or another they think they have the truth! They read all these papers. And then, (1) because somebody tells them that the Jews did not have postponements during the time of Christ and (2) because someone seems to offer some kind of proof (by quoting the Talmud, or the Mishnah, or some encyclopedia), they surmise that these people who are writing these papers, must be true in what they say. But what is actually happening is that these people are becoming the victims of **cleverly arranged treatises**

In this age, we are suffering from a glut of information. It is in the world, and it is in the church. I know that, especially any of you who are able to get onto the Internet, you understand what a glut of information that there is out there. We are finding in our office that very much startling information that comes across our desks, via the Web, is simply **not true** whenever one tracks down the sources of the information. Much of this sensational news is written by people with an axe to grind. And those of us who are directly involved in producing a magazine—like *Forerunner*—have to be very careful to track down this information before we let what we print go out into the public (to you, for example).

You are going to have to be very *careful* and *patient* as time goes on, because we have recently learned something—namely that clever men, in computer areas, have developed the means to **create** virtual news "on the fly." I know that most of you cannot grasp the sobering entity that we are beginning to deal with this. However, I will just give you a little bit of an insight into what is right on the cusp of occurring. In other words, it can be done now. But they are developing it, so that they are able to do this right "on the fly." That is, virtually **instantaneously!**

Those of you who saw it will recall the movie "Wag the Dog." In it, presidential advisors concocted a make-believe war that occurred *nowhere* in the world—only on television, for consumption of the American public. You can probably also recall movies (like "Jurassic Park" and "Star Wars") which were almost entirely computer generated. Well, that is what we are getting into here—where virtual news can be computer generated.

Now, dead men can be "resurrected" by a computer, and films sent out to TV news broadcasts. And though these men are not alive, they are able to make them say things that they never said while they were alive. In other words, **words** are put into these people's mouths and lips. They are all perfectly synchronized, as though they are saying these things. And they make it as though they are literally **at that moment** saying these things.

Maybe that could not be put over on you—because you know these people are dead, and this is just a film or something. But even more sobering is that live men in positions of power can be shown (on computer generated news broadcasts) giving speeches, answering questions in a news conference, or performing acts they never said or did. And it can be **created on the spot** as though you are watching it ["live"] for the very first time. And the only limitation to this is what is contained within the memory banks of a computer. The events *never took place* anywhere—except within the bowels of a computer, and within the foul mind of the person who is at the computer. A crisis can be generated by computer, and serve as very effective propaganda—in order to maneuver public sentiment. The public, then, is moved—by impatient mob mentality—to form beliefs founded upon absolutely *nothing real*.

I bring this up because we are moving within a period of time in which miracles are prophesied to occur. Though those *miracles* are, in some cases, going to be **real**—I am telling you this so that you will be aware, be patient, hold your peace, and wait until more proof is generated as to whether or not these things are **really** occurring. As you know, the Beast is going to come in like somebody who is a great benefactor of mankind; and the false prophet is going to turn people toward the worship of the Beast. And I am pretty sure that he is going to be doing some "miraculous" things as well. Who knows whether they **really** take place, or not? Some will. Some will not. **Do not be fooled!** That is my message here.

And it alarms me, because people are being "taken in" on the calendar—with very **little** information, and virtually **no** research on their part. (Maybe just a couple of papers.) One couple wrote me, and they said that they read something in an encyclopedia. That is, one or two lines in an encyclopedia that said, "The calendar in its present form has existed this way since 358 A.D."

From that *one sentence*, they were convinced that Darryl was correct. That is, when they put it together with his persona. Some seem **willing to believe** simply because it either (1) fits into a preconception that they have already held or (2) because they are attracted by the personality of an individual.

There are generally two wrong approaches made by those who are clamoring for calendar change (I will just call them "the calendar changers.") and that they choose to follow in their presentations. The *first* one is that the calculated Hebrew calendar is too complex. "The calendar must be simple," they say, "so that common people can grasp it." The *second* is that the Jews are guilty of deliberate manipulation in order to produce a calendar that is more convenient in actual usage. In other words, the Jews introduced postponements into the calendar to manipulate when certain festivals would fall—so that, as much as possible, (1) there will be a preparation day preceding a festival and (2) a holy day will neither immediately precede nor immediately follow a weekly Sabbath.

Now, we are going to go back to the first one—that is, that the calendar must be simple. A major mistake is made, by separating the church from Israel. I am talking about the nation of Israel—not the nation of Judah over there. I am talking about the Israel of the Bible! Thus, a major mistake is made, by separating the church from Israel. God's purpose is being worked out through the nation of Israel. In one sense, the church is merely a digression within the flow of the events.

The church is an important *digression*, and it is important to God's purpose. But the church is seen in the Bible as a part of Israel. It is an institution **within** Israel. Understand this—the calculated Hebrew calendar is the calendar of *the nation of Israel*. And it has been in existence since Israel began (as we will show you as we move along).

Where in the Bible does God say that the calendar has to be simple? Well, it does not! Nowhere is such a thought even implied in the Bible. Such a thought is utter nonsense, and is merely an invention of those who want a change. I want you to think of this principle: **There is nothing that God creates that is simple.** The creations of God, indeed, are logical (after one understands them); but simple they are not.

I once heard a man say that a single "simple" human cell is about as complicated as the street map of New York City. Now maybe the illustration is not precise in its accuracy, but it illustrates that there is nothing simple about life at all. And a "simple" cell is a marvelous, wonderful invention—which is **complex**.

The things that God creates are exceedingly complex. That includes His Word. This Book is the creation of the Mind of God. And virtually everything that God creates has **multiple uses**—just as air and water have multiple uses. God has written His Word in such a manner that its message must be **miraculously revealed**.

I Corinthians 2:6-9 Howbeit [Paul says] we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none [N-O-N-E] of the princes [the leadership, the great brains, the scholars] of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him."

Without God's miraculous intervention in our lives—triggering something in our minds to make His Word understandable and meaningful to us—we would never get it! It takes a revelation of God.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

The entire operation of God's plan of salvation is by faith. Now faith is very easily defined, but the reality of living it—in every circumstance of life—is exceedingly complex! Faith involves an ever-deepening trust. Trust operates during the interim *between* the time of belief and *until* one possesses what he hopes for. Thus the exercising of faith (that is, exercising trust in God) is going to go through complex periods of time and circumstances, when one does not fully understand what is going on—**while God is creating!** There is deep stuff here. Life is not simple for those who must live by faith!

II Peter 3:15-16 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you; [Now notice a little three-letter word here] as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

In **all** of Paul's epistles, there are some things difficult to understand. The Bible is not "simple." The Bible is a creation of God. God has written it in the way that He has for reasons that are His own; but man cannot just look in it and understand it. Even people who are converted—we look at it, and we do not "get it" in many cases.

Where does it say that the calendar has to be simple? Do you begin to get what I am drifting towards here? The calendar fits in with the rest of the Bible. *The Bible is complex.* And so is the calendar complex. It came out of the greatest Mind there is, in all of the universe; and He chose to write it in this way. He gives understanding to those who yield to Him and those who are chosen of Him.

Romans 11:33-34 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?

Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

That is pretty clear. That book is going to be absolutely closed to mankind *until* the time of the end.

Daniel 12:9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end."

God's Word is **deep**, and it takes *revelation* to understand it. Why in the world would we think the calendar should be simple? The calendar fits right into the way that God has written everything else.

John 6:60 Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear [grasp] it?"

How many times, brethren, have you read prophecies that say, "**Then** you shall know that I am the **LOORD**." God is warning us that we are not going to "get it" until after it is over, and we look at it in hindsight. Has anybody yet understood, and been able to

pinpoint, when Christ is going to return? Not on your life!

Here is one of the ways that the calendar changers appeal to people's thinking or logic. This is the way that they present it. They say, "Suppose that one is going through the Tribulation and has no access to the calendar. How will they then be able to keep the festivals, during the Tribulation?" That is a presentation that seems very appealing—until you begin to think about it.

Turn with me back to Jeremiah 30. Have you ever stopped to think that, for those going through the Tribulation, it may not be possible even to keep the weekly Sabbath, let alone the holy days? Those people are not going to be dancing through the Tribulation. Some people somehow have the concept that they are going to be free to do a great deal, but that is not what I see in the Bible.

Jeremiah 30:6-7 Ask you now, and see whether a man does travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

A time that **none** is like it!

Some of you may have experienced warfare in a direct way. I never have. I have seen a great number of films that have to do with, let us say, what bombed-out Germany (or Italy) looked like during World War II. Every one of us is at least somewhat familiar with the Holocaust that was perpetrated against the Jews. Well, as bad as World War II was, it is not even going to begin to compare with the time of Jacob's trouble. It is going to be so bad, worldwide, that the Bible indicates that—by the time this is all over—only 10% of the present world population will be alive.

Yet these people think that they are going to be able to keep the holy days? It will be the most intense time of mass murder that has ever occurred on earth. And you know very well that Revelation 3:18 clearly states that the Laodiceans are going to go **through the fires** of the Tribulation. He said, "Buy of me gold, tried [refined] in the fire."

Ezekiel 5:1-4 And you, son of man, take you a sharp knife, take you a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon your head and upon your beard. Then take you balances to weigh, and divide the hair. You shall burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled.

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And you shall take a third part, and smite about it with a knife. And a third part you shall scatter in the wind. And I will draw out a sword after them. You shall also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in your skirts. Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

If we properly understand this prophecy, that small hank of hair (the last one taken from Ezekiel's pocket and then thrown into the fire and burned) is the Laodiceans martyred during the Tribulation, as the fifth seal is fulfilled. I do not know whether you understand this, but it seems pretty clear that not a single Laodicean is going to live through the Tribulation. Hair is the most flammable part of our body. And when you take hair and throw it into the fire, puff—it is gone.

By the judgment of Jesus Christ, the Laodiceans—because of their attitude and behavior (their conduct toward Him and His Way)—have **forfeited** their rights to the place of safety, and to live and observe the Sabbath and the holy days. They have told God that they have no need of Him—they have need of nothing. These people do not need "a simple calendar." They need the correct calendar. And they need to submit to it! That is, to submit to the one that God gave to His church.

Now, in this little scenario that I just went through, **where is God** in all of this? Where is God—in them having to go through extended circumstances without His guidance of things? Does God leave His people without guidance? That is virtually what these people are saying. Is God unfaithful? I will tell you, these people are living by sight—fearing circumstances that are not going to occur, because **God is God! He is faithful!** He has already given His church the calendar that He wants us to have. And these people are breaking away from it—faithlessly.

He is the One who is Faithful.

I want you to take a quick chronological trip with me. We will begin here in Exodus 12; and then we will just refer to the other scriptures that I have here, because I know that you are familiar with them and I know that you will get the sense of what I am talking about.

Exodus 12:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt...

Notice: "in the land of Egypt." That is, before they ever left Egypt—while they were still slaves in Egypt.

Exodus 12:1-2 The LORD spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you."

They already had a calendar! Before they even left Egypt. And it was not the Egyptian calendar, brethren. That is very clearly proved by archeologists. Egypt always had a solar calendar. The Hebrew calendar is lunar-solar. Because of so many finds having been made in the pyramids, and temples, and burial grounds all over Egypt—it is very clear that Israel was *not* using the Egyptian calendar. This [reference in Exodus 12] was the calendar that God gave to them. So, even before they left Egypt, they already knew what the first month of the year was going to be.

By the time you move into Exodus 16, they are now out of Egypt. What happened in Exodus 16? God made sure that they understood **on that calendar** where the Sabbath fell. Just in case they had lost it, by the use of the manna He made it clear to them where the Sabbath was on *that* calendar. That occurred even before Mt. Sinai and the giving of the law. It occurred even before Leviticus 23, and the listing of all of the holy days. This was forty long years before coming into the Land. About forty-seven years before the tabernacle and the brazen altar were set up within the Land and they could go through the ceremonies—God made sure Israel had a calendar. And they knew how to use that calendar.

Turn with me to Romans 15. This is addressed to His church.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime [Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, Exodus 16, and the book of Joshua, Judges, and so forth] were written for our learning. . .

We can learn, right from God's own Word, God made sure that the Israelites—the beginning of the church in the wilderness—had a calendar! They needed a calendar in order to keep the holy days. They needed a calendar to keep track even of the weekly Sabbath. ***The faithful God*** supplies all of the needs of His people.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we [the church] through patience and comfort of the

scriptures might have hope.

Why hope? We can have hope because God sets the patterns that He does in the Old Testament. And those patterns never deviate—because if God deviates, He cannot be trusted. And so He sets steady patterns in everything. And He conforms to those patterns so that we can have hope. In order to have faith, you have to have *hope* to go with it—that these things can be accomplished and that He can really be trusted.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

No variableness—no variation in God's pattern! So He establishes **a pattern**, for all those who are going to join the pilgrimage—as all of us have done since 1933 and 1934. We joined the same pilgrimage—in principle, in spirit—as those people coming out of Egypt (there in Exodus 12). In 1933 and 1934, Herbert Armstrong began preaching, and the pilgrimage of the Worldwide Church of God began. As we move along the way, some are dying off; but others are being added. And the calendar has been in place from the very beginning.

When you became part of that pilgrimage, what calendar was presented to you? The same one that was presented to Herbert Armstrong! When he was added to the pilgrimage, what calendar was given to him? Are you aware that nobody, in all of their researches, has **ever** found any reference of the church—in any time of its history—using any other calendar than the same one that the Jews use? It is the Hebrew calendar.

Now, Herbert Armstrong began observing the festivals following the dates of Jewish observance. After a few years, he discovered that they were keeping Pentecost wrongly—on Sivan 6. And so, he recounted; but he recounted to another wrong day, because he counted as an English-speaking person counts. That is, exclusively. Thus, for a number of years, the church kept it on a Monday. But the change (from Sivan 6 to a Monday) did **not** alter the underlying calendar system. That is, the system by which the calendar is created.

So Herbert Armstrong got closer, but there was no cigar. However, it did show that there was a willingness to change if he was shown that he was wrong. And we kept it, in a generally fine attitude, until it was discovered (in 1973-74) that we should have counted

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as a Hebrew-speaking person—inclusively—beginning with a Sunday and ending on a Sunday (rather than on a Monday). But, again, when the change was made, it did **not** alter the underlying calendar.

In 1940, the calendar was researched into—due to a challenge that was made by a Church of God Seventh Day elder. Herbert Armstrong and the Eugene brethren judged that they had no authority to make a change. It was an effort by the whole congregation to see what they could learn about the calendar. They came to the conclusion that they had no authority to make a change, and that was a correct decision.

It was looked into again, a couple of different times, after Ambassador College began—but, again, no change. When Pentecost was changed in 1974, the calendar was not changed. And in 1981 was the last article that I have ever seen published by the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College. It focused on the authority issue, and no change was made in the system of determining the calendar.

Since 1989 and 1990 (when people began leaving the Worldwide Church of God, because of all the doctrinal changes), every one of the major spin-offs has once again gone into the calendar. United has done it. Living has done it (while it was still Global). Philadelphia did it. Christian Biblical Church of God did it. The Church of God—David Hulme—did it. The Church of God of the Eternal did it, and the Church of the Great God. Each one of these groups—***separately and independently***—has decided to remain with the calculated Hebrew calendar.

Do you see *the pattern*? Those who are part of the true church have stuck with the calendar that was given to Israel. And I fear, brethren, that those who are going off into *another calendar* have stepped completely beyond the bounds of the true church. (I will tell you why, in a little bit.) But that pattern that we have seen, all the way from 1940 on, presents historical evidence that God is guiding His church in this issue. He has not stepped off somewhere, and kind of forgotten and left us on our own. And we are going to quickly touch on a few scriptures, so that we can see the principle that is involved here.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:32 He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Do you see the principle here? He has not left us in the dark regarding a calendar.

II Corinthians 9:8 -And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

That, in principle, includes the calendar! Without being given a calendar—the correct calendar—we cannot "abound" and "have all sufficiency in all things...to every good work."

From the every beginning of the Bible, there are indications of a calendar. In the early portions of the Bible, the ages of the men were known; and so they are witnessed too within God's Word. The Flood itself gives witness to a calendar, because the days are very clearly counted out—even to the point of knowing when the rains came and when the ark settled. Month and day are given. And so times are clearly marked—even in the early portions of the book of GENESIS.

But somehow, brethren, the calendar changers seem to think that somehow the Jews have put one over on God. That is, somehow or another, God was distracted—a distraction that has lasted now, at least, 1600 years. And that He has made no attempts to correct things until *they* came along, at the time of the end. And suddenly He woke up, and He chose *them* to make the change for the entire church. You talk about **presumption!** (It is not just in the ministry.)

Now, if this is true, I would like for you to ask and answer this question (for yourself): How is it that we have so many different calendars within the church of God? And every one of them is different. Is this the mind of God—that is so divided that He cannot give His church one right calendar, so that everybody can be unified? Maybe I am being sarcastic, brethren, but sometimes you have to be sarcastic to make the point clear. **God is faithful!** That is the issue here, and this is why it is so serious. These people are accusing God of being "unfaithful"—*until* they came along!

It is time that we see the seriousness of this, and turn our backs on it, and have nothing at all to do with it. All it is is a temptation to wean you—and others—away from the church. It is **a devious distraction** of Satan the Devil—to throw the church into confusion. And it is nothing more than a continuation of what happened in that period between Herbert Armstrong's death until about 1995. The same principle is being followed—to wean the church away from "the faith once delivered" to the saints.

What I want to ask you is "Where was God's *reaction* to what these calendar changers are claiming?" (Especially regarding such a critical doctrine.) Does not God say that He was in the cloud and also in the fire? In other words, that is an image—a symbol—that He is watching over His people. While they left Egypt, He was watching so closely that not even a dog barked. But somehow or another, He missed the calendar change? Did He not say, "My angels shall go before you"? Does He not say, "He that touches you, touches the apple of My eye"? What would you do if someone poked you in the eye? You would react, would you not? Do you think God will not react when somebody tries to deceive His people into thinking that there is another calendar?

Did not God say that He bore them up on eagles' wings? Of course, He did; and He was with them. Does He not say, to the New Testament church, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you"? Did not Jesus say that He watches His creation so closely that not even a sparrow falls without His permission?

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus said to those Pharisees there that they were supposed to tithe so carefully—on mint, anise, and cummin. And yet somehow God overlooks something as major as a calendar (for 1500-2000 years)? Why did not God correct the calendar while Herbert Armstrong was alive? That is, when there was an apostle there. The answer is simple. There is nothing wrong with it! That is why. We are getting into some serious stuff here.

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man.

If somebody cannot answer that question that I just asked (That is, why did not God correct the calendar while Herbert Armstrong was alive?), then they are **accusing God**—either of being too weak, or uncaring of His children. Let us just explore this for a minute. We just read James 1:13. God does not tempt His children into sin. If there is no calendar, and He does nothing to correct it—is He not leaving that open to temptation, to just worship any time you good and well please?

We are going back to the book of Jeremiah; and I will just use one scripture here, to show you a principle. Listen to God, speaking in the first person here:

Jeremiah 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt [Now, apply this spiritually. "Since you came out of Egypt spiritually..."] unto this day [right to the present time], I have even sent unto you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.

Jeremiah uses this—and other statements that are reworded a little bit, but have exactly the same sense to them—probably twenty times! It is a pattern that He has established within this book, which helps us to understand that **God does not let sin lie**—in His church, in His people, in His family. He makes sure that it is corrected!

Hebrews 12:5-6 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, "My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.

These scriptures (that I have just read) show that God does not let sin lie in His church and that, if a person is His son, then He is going to go after that person and scourge and chasten them to get them back into line. That is what a good parent will do. They do not let their children go pell-mell towards death; but they reach out their hand and try to correct the situation as best they possibly can. So, *if* the calendar-changing people are correct and God has just let this thing sit for at least 1600 years, *then* the conclusion has to be that He does not care whether His children are sinning.

Number two: Since the church was not chastened, the church of God is *not* among those that He loves. He chastens **every** son He loves! The only alternative is (because **God is faithful**, and He will *not* let sin lie amongst His people) that there is nothing wrong with the calendar. Therefore, the "deep stuff" that I mentioned is that these people are accusing God of not being faithful. They are accusing Him of sin—of failing to meet the loving needs of His children. Of just letting them run wild, while He dawdled off in space—doing nothing. The issue here is *the faithfulness of God*, and whether we trust Him to supply the need.

Now, the calendar-changers give evidence from things they find (primarily in the Talmud) about some Jews not using postponements at the time of Christ. Well, let me tell you the truth here. They, indeed, do find such information in the Talmud. Do you understand what the Talmud is? The Talmud is a commentary. It consists of two parts: the Mishnah and the Gemara. Are you familiar with modern commentaries? Well, the Talmud is not much different from modern commentaries.

If you are familiar with modern commentaries, then you understand that in them you might find any number of opinions of scholars—from various schools of thought, or academies—who are quoted, on any given passage, as to what they believe is the intention of the scripture. And so the Talmud is going to have things that **contradict** other

things that are in it. So now we have to stop and think. The Talmud is a commentary, written by men. Is the Talmud the Bible? It is not! How much authority is one going to give it, compared to the Bible?

Are you aware that, at the time of Hillel II (358-359 AAD), a controversy over the calendar, and including the postponements, was going on—between the Babylonian rabbis and the Jerusalem rabbis? Are you aware that the Babylonian rabbis were *not* privy to the methodology of the Hebrew calendar? Authority over the calendar had resided, since the days of Ezra, with the Jerusalem rabbis. And it has been traced out that those rabbis who made those statements regarding "no postponements" were Babylonian rabbis. They were left behind in Babylon when God reestablished Judah in Palestine.

So those statements are, indeed, there [in the Talmud]; but they [the ones who made those statements] were *not* the official "caretakers" of the calendar. It was the Jerusalem rabbis within the Sanhedrin—called, officially, the *bet din*, that was the calendar court. It was their responsibility to keep the calendar accurate at all times.

Hillel II was of the Jerusalem school. And when he published the rules for the calendar, he published the rules of the Jerusalem rabbis. They are the ones that the Jews have used—and that the church of God has used, right along with them.

Are you aware of how Mr. & Mrs. Israelite, back in ancient Israel, found out that a new month had begun? Do you know how they did it? It was declared, from Jerusalem, by the *bet din*. Once a new moon was confirmed and sanctified, the priests caused signal fires to be lit on all the high hills—in order to inform people.

Now, why is this arcane fact something that you should know? There is a very good reason that it was done this way (besides the fact that they did not have computers, and telephones, and the radio technology that we have today). It was done this way in order to keep each and every Israelite ***from deciding by himself*** when the new moon had occurred. There had to be a central authority, which God ruled, that would make the decisions regarding the beginning of each and every month. If it was done any other way, Judea would have split into thousands of different people deciding for themselves when to keep the Sabbath and when to keep the holy days.

This was done in order to retain *organization* and *unity* within the body of people. They did it that way because they could read, in the book of Judges, about how "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." And they took those steps to unify that—in order to keep unity within the body.

A Calendar Summary by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Do you see what is happening? This principle (in Judges 17:6; 21:25) is being followed, to some degree, within the church. And that is why there are now so many calendars out there, impacting upon the church of God—because people are doing what is right in their own eyes.

I want to get to one more very important thing here. Please turn with me to Revelation 3:10. This is addressed to the Philadelphia group; and the Philadelphia group is one of those four that definitely have "end time" importance.

Revelation 3:10-11 Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world [this time of Jacob's trouble], to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly. [Now, watch the next phrase or two] Hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.

"Hold that fast which you have." What does that mean? Hold fast to your character. Hold fast to your doctrinal beliefs (because men are going to try to change them). Hold fast to your attitude of love for one another. It is a warning from Jesus Christ, to **all** of the churches (all seven of them); but it is specifically given to Philadelphia. Because they are of little strength, they are warned that they are going to be approached *to change* their ideas. And, if those doctrinal beliefs that you have been given are taken away, your faith is going to be taken right along with it. It is going to change; and you will no longer have the faith of Jesus Christ.

From here, we are going to go to I John 2. Remember who wrote the book of Revelation, and when John lived.

I John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Now drop down to verse 24, and tie this in with Revelation 3:10-11.

I John 2:24 Let that therefore abide [live, continue] in you, which you have heard from the beginning. ...

That is, that doctrinal base—that teaching that we had from the beginning. Do you understand that this is one of the patterns that God shows in the Bible? He sent a prophet. The prophet taught the people the message of God. The people followed the prophet, followed the teaching of God. But then, usually as soon as the prophet was gone, the people turned away. God is telling the people, "*Hang on to what you were given!*"

I John 2:24-26 ...If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

The first century church went through, in principle, the same things that we are going through. Instead of a prophet, we were sent an apostle. But now let us go back to the book of Daniel, where it is talking about the Beast.

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

"He shall think to change times." I looked in a number of Protestant commentaries, just to see what they had to say about that. It was very interesting. They used different words, but they all said the same thing. "*Times*" had to do with **the calendar!** One of them (I believe it was Expositor's) said that it had to do with ***the scheduling of festival times.***

Now, I want to ask you something. "The Beast—is he being guided by the Spirit of God?" You know very well that he is not being lead and inspired by the Spirit of God. Rather, he is being lead, guided, directed, and inspired by **the antichrist**—the spirit of Satan.

I John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now

already is it in the world.

This spirit of calendar change is being guided by the same spirit that is going to guide the Beast. It is a spirit that seeks to change the scheduling of festival dates. And, as I mentioned to you earlier, there is to me a very serious reason to believe that these people are stepping right out of the church of God. The first one I have already given. That is, every time the church of God has looked into the calendar—(1) under Herbert Armstrong and then (2) after he died, as all of the major groups or spin-offs has looked into the calendar—each and every one of them has decided in favor of the [Hebrew] calendar. Also, that we do not have authority over that calendar. That is the calendar of Israel. The church is an institution within Israel, and we are subject to that calendar. The "errors" that people see within it are mere perceptions of their own minds—and that is all.

The second reason is this (and it is because of this thing about the Beast and the antichrist). What they are doing is tantamount to—and it is in the same spirit as—changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. They are, in effect, changing a portion of the fourth commandment. That is no different in spirit than what the Catholic Church did—and the Protestants after them—in choosing to worship on that day **apart from** that which God had assigned. Only, in this case, it is a little more subtle. It involves only the church of God, but it still involves Sabbaths.

I did not list them all (one, two, three, four, and so forth); but there were actually **ten things** that I said about the calendar and those who are following after its change. See how many of them you can find. The first one is that people are so **impatient** about this. Please do not be impatient. Look into things. Think. Turn them over in your mind. Counsel with others. Talk with others. Seek a multitude of help about it. And, whenever you get puzzled about some kind of a doctrine, do not just go barreling off. Take time to look into things. You will save yourself a multitude of problems.